

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 12, 2013

The Honorable Michael Simpson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Moran:

We are writing to emphasize the importance of the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) in facilitating economic development and job creation in areas where there are endangered and rare species of animals and plants.

The CESCF includes subaccounts that provide vital funding to regional Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) through competitive grants. Regional HCPs, which are led by local governments, facilitate urban-suburban infrastructure building, development and job creation through coordinated permitting for endangered species impacts. They are important in areas where there is a large and growing population and also many species of rare animals and plants that often are found nowhere else. Both the HCPs and the CESCF are strongly supported by the involved local governments and by the development and environmental communities.

These HCPs provide a vital win-win solution, balancing the need for economic growth and jobs with conservation of important natural resources. Regional HCPs maintain local control over land use decision-making by delegating enforcement of federal and state wildlife protection laws to local jurisdictions. In addition, large-scale HCPs provide coordinated permitting for projects related to transportation, energy and water delivery projects. They provide vital streamlining and certainty to the development community and local governments.

The CESCF is one of the most successful grant programs within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and one of the most important federal partnerships with local governments. It allows any state with a Fish and Wildlife Service cooperative agreement to apply for grants and participate in a wide array of voluntary projects for conservation of threatened, endangered, candidate, and at-risk species conservation.

The CESCF program has recognized the importance of providing grants to cities, counties, conservation organizations, and non-federal partners for the conservation and protection of threatened and endangered species. These partners bring their own resources to the table, which are combined with federal funds to achieve both protection

of natural resources and creation of jobs through facilitation of development. This results in significant leveraging of federal dollars.



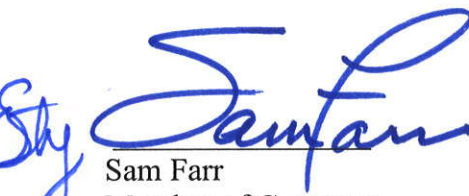
There are an increasing number of large-scale HCPs in the planning phase around the country and several plans that have been approved recently or are nearing completion. As a result there is increasing demand for the CESCOF's HCP planning grants and HCP land acquisition grants. These competitive grants are vital to the success of large-scale HCPs and the ability of local jurisdictions to prepare and implement the plans.




As Congress works to address our nation's fiscal situation, we would appreciate your consideration of the importance of the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund.

Sincerely,

 Jerry McNerney Member of Congress	 Lois Capps Member of Congress	 Matt Cartwright Member of Congress
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 Judy Chu Member of Congress	 David Cicilline Member of Congress	 Gerald Connolly Member of Congress
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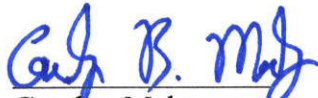
 Susan Davis Member of Congress	 Elizabeth Etsy Member of Congress	 Sam Farr Member of Congress
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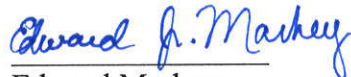
 John Garamendi Member of Congress	 Raul Grijalva Member of Congress	 Alcee Hastings Member of Congress
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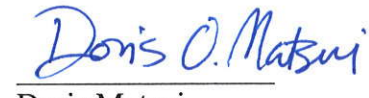

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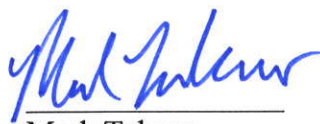

George Miller
Member of Congress

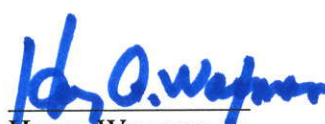

Scott Peters
Member of Congress

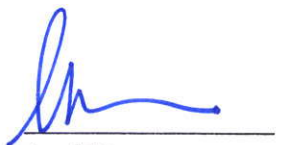

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